

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4975

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, UNHCR
SUBJECT: UNHCR MEETING ON FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

REF: A. STATE 10432; B. GENEVA 00220

1. MEETING OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF 31 UNHCR
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STATES HELD AS SCHEDULED JANUARY 20.
VIRTUALLY ALL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WERE REPRESENTED.
ATTENDING FOR U.S. WERE AMBASSADOR AND HUMANITARIAN
AFFAIRS COUNSELOR.

2. AS SURMISED REFTELS, PURPOSE OF MEETING WAS TO REVEAL
TO PERMANENT REPS FOR RELAY TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS PRE-
CARIOUS STATE OF FINANCING OF UNHCR REGUALR PROGRAM.
AFTER INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR-
MAN (KAPPELEN, NORWAY), NEWLY INSTALLED UNHCR POUL
HARTLING SPOKE TO URGENT NEED FOR FUNDING OF 1978 REGULAR
PROGRAM BUDGET WITH TARGET OF \$35.2 MILLION. OF THIS,
HE STATED, LESS THAN \$13 MILLION HAD BEEN PLEDGED BY
51 GOVERNMENTS IN NOVEMBER PLEDGING CONFERENCE IN NEW
YOUR, LEAVING A SHORTFALL OF OVER \$22 MILLION. (AT ANOTHER
POINT, HARTLING MODIFIED THIS FIGURE SLIGHTLY IN STATING
THAT "LESS THAN \$20 MILLION" HAD BEEN PLEDGED BUT THAT
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"ALMOST \$8 MILLION" OF THIS FIGURE WAS "CONDITIONAL").
HARTLING DWELT PARTICULARLY ON NEED FOR FUNDS EARLY IN
YEAR, STATING THAT WERE THEY NOT AVAILABLE IN SUFFICIENT
QUANTITY, PRIORITIES WOULD HAVE TO BE REVISED AND SOME
PROGRAMS RESHAPED. HE LAID PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE
NEED FOR ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES FROM INDOCHINA, NOTABLY
THE BOAT CASES. FUNDS AVAILABLE TO UNHCR FOR THE

REGULAR PROGRAM AMOUNTED TO LESS THAN \$7 MILLION AS OF THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR, HARTLING SAID.

3. HARTLING STATED THAT HE WISHED TO GAIN A "FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE" THROUGH FIELD TRIPS TO ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD WHERE UNHCR FUNCTIONED. AS A FIRST STEP, HE TOLD GROUP THAT HE WOULD BE LEAVING NEXT WEEK ON A TRIP TO SOUTHERN AFRICA, INCLUDING BOTSWANA, LESOTHO, MOZAMBIQUE, SWAZILAND, TANZANIA AND ZAMBIA. HE IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN LEARNING WHAT THE UNHCR IS DOING TO ASSIST REFUGEES FROM NAMIBIA, SOUTH AFRICA AND ZIMBABWE, "AND INTENDS TO PURSUE WITH MEMBER GOVERNMENTS ACTION REQUIRED BY THE LAST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ON THIS SUBJECT." HE POINTED OUT THAT UNHCR NOW OPERATES PROGRAMS IN MORE THAN 25 AFRICAN COUNTRIES, WHICH REPRESENT MORE THAN HALF OF THE GENERAL PROGRAM ALLOCATIONS (\$18.9 MILLION OF \$35.2 MILLION). HE SPOKE OF "EQUALLY DISTURBING" SITUATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA AND ASIA WHERE SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION EXIST.

4. IN MAKING HIS PLEA FOR A GENEROUS RESPONSE, HARTLING STATED THAT THE BASIC MINIMUM WAS BEING ASKED, BUT THAT EXPERIENCE DEMONSTRATED, AS LAST YEAR, THAT ADDITIONAL REQUESTS OFTEN HAD TO BE MADE AS UNFORESEEN NEEDS DEVELOPED. HE CERTIFIED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD DO HIS UTMOST TO AVOID THE NECESSITY FOR RAISING THE TARGET

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FIGURE AGAIN THIS YEAR. IN CLOSING HIS REMARKS, HARTLING URGED THAT PLEDGES ALREADY MADE BE FULFILLED AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE, THAT THOSE MEMBER STATES THAT HAVE NOT CONTRIBUTED DO SO, AND THAT THOSE WHICH HAVE MADE CONTRIBUTIONS, INCLUDING TRADITIONAL DONORS, ENDEAVOR TO INCREASE THEIR GRANTS. A FORMAL APPEAL WILL BE ISSUED TO ALL MEMBER STATES JANUARY 23, HARTLING SAID.

5. AS ANTICIPATED, NO STARTLING ANNOUNCEMENTS OF NEW CONTRIBUTIONS WERE MADE BY THE 18 REPRESENTATIVES RESPONDING TO HARTLING'S PLEA (NIGERIA, FRANCE, LEBANON, FRG, SWEDEN, AUSTRALIA, DENMARK, NORWAY, U.S., ITALY, TURKEY, ISRAEL, IRAN, BELGIUM, U.K., GREECE AND ICELAND). U.S. REP DREW ON GUIDANCE REF A IN RESPONSE. NIGERIA POINTED TO ITS ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS IN NIGERIA INSTITUTIONS, AND SUGGESTED THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF REGIONAL GROUPS MEET IN GENEVA IN AN ACTION PROGRAM TO INTERVENE WITH THEIR GOVERNMENTS ON BEHALF OF UNHCR. (THE SHAIR STATED IN CONCLUDING REMARKS THAT THIS PROPOSAL WOULD BE PURSUED BY UNHCR STAFF). NIGERIA ALSO OBSERVED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A CAMPAIGN TO BROADEN THE BASE OF TRADITIONAL DONORS, A RECOMMENDATION THAT WAS SECONDED

BY SEVERAL FOLLOWING SPEAKERS.

6. FRG REP ANNOUNCED THAT HIS COUNTRY HAD INCREASED ITS PROGRAM CONTRIBUTION BY 25 PERCENT THIS YEAR AND WOULD FUND SUPPORT TO (UNIDENTIFIED) SPECIAL PROGRAMS. THE SWEDISH REP REPEATED THE PLEDGE MADE IN LAST FALL'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE THAT SWEDEN WOULD TRIPLE ITS ALLOCATION THIS YEAR FROM 5 MILLION CROWNS TO 15 MILLION CROWNS, AND THAT \$2.2 MILLION WOULD BE GIVEN BY SWEDEN OUTSIDE THE GENERAL PROGRAM. ADDITIONALLY, HE SAID, SWEDEN WOULD MAKE A THREE YEAR (1978-1980) PLEDGE OF \$16.5 AND WOULD

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GIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION AS TO WHAT IT MIGHT DO "IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES". AUSTRALIA REPEATED ITS EARLIER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION THAT CERTAIN POSITIONS BE TRANSFERRED FROM VOLUNTARY FUNDING TO THE REGULAR BUDGET. NORWAY POINTED OUT THAT IT HAS PLEDGED 9.8 MILLION KRONER, 50 PERCENT ABOVE LAST YEAR'S CONTRIBUTION, WHICH, IN RESPONSE TO HARTLING'S PLEA FOR EARLY PAYMENT, IS NOW "IN THE PIPELINE". NORWAY ALSO STRESSED THE SPECIAL PLIGHT OF THE BOAT PEOPLE AND ITS ROLE IN INSTRUCTING NORWEGIAN FLAG SHIP CAPTAINS TO PROVIDE THEM ALL POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE AS A "MORAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATION".

7. ITALY STATED THAT IN ITS PRESENT FINANCIAL CRISIS IT WAS UNABLE TO MAKE A FINANCIAL PLEDGE, BUT THAT IT IS A MAJOR COUNTRY OF FIRST ASYLUM, FREQUENTLY HARBORING REFUGEES OVER LONG PERIODS OF TIME, WITH RESULTANT DIFFICULTIES FOR THE GOVERNMENT. ITALY ALSO BESPOKE A SPECIAL INTEREST IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN REFUGEES, AND SAID IT WOULD DO ITS UTMOST TO "COOPERATE" IN THE FORTHCOMING APPEAL.

THE BELGIAN REP STATED THAT HIS MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS WOULD PROPOSE THAT THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT MAKE
A SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION FOR REFUGEES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA,
WHILE THE IRANIAN REP NOTED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD
INCREASED ITS PLEDGE TO UNHCR THIS YEAR BY AN UNSPECIFIED
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AMOUNT. THE GREEK REP STATED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD IN-
CREASED ITS CONTRIBUTION FOR 1978 BY 30 PERCENT OVER THE
PRECEEDING YEAR.

8. MISSION WILL FORWARD SPECIFICS OF APPEAL WHEN RE-
CEIVED.

VANDEN HEUVEL

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